

Matsell Cottage  
Northwest Corner of Township Road 229 and Illinois Route 1  
Brownsville Vicinity  
Carmi Township  
White County  
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1184

HABS  
ILL  
97-BROV.V,  
1-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MATSELL COTTAGE

HABS NO. IL-1184

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97- BROV. 1  
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Location: Approximately 1.8 miles northeast of Brownsville, Illinois, which is located on Illinois Route 1 (between Carmi and Norris City) in Section 28 of Carmi Township, White County, Illinois

USGS Carmi, Illinois, Quadrangle  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates  
16.392660.4212800

Present Owner: State of Illinois Department of Transportation  
400 W. Wabash Ave.  
Effingham, Illinois 62401

Present Occupant: None

Present Use: Vacant

Statement of  
Significance:

The Matsell Cottage apparently dates to the 1850s. It is one of only two known nineteenth century log houses still standing in White County. As an example of a simple variety of the traditional Midland Log House, the cottage has "only a single room-sized square or (rectangular) unit called (a 'pen') with a loft area above used for sleeping....Framed additions and porches" of the Matsell Cottage are also typical, "added to the log house as local sawmills provided nearby sources of cut lumber" [1]. The Matsell Cottage apparently represents an example of what is referred to as a second generation type of log house. These continued "The tradition of building with horizontal log walls...in many areas long after cut timber was locally available. Usually a framework of roughly squared and notched logs was constructed to be originally covered with shingles or weatherboard" [2].

The cottage also derives significance from its function as an early residence of a pioneer Carmi township farm family who arrived in an early wave of non-Native American settlement of White county that ran from the eighteen-teens through the early 1840s. The cottage continued to serve modest income families until the 1980s with relatively little negative impact to the integrity of its basic original construction.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of Erection:

The actual date of erection is unknown, but a number of clues suggest that the cottage was built in the 1850s. The United States Government Land Office Survey map of the area in 1851 shows no structure on the Carmi township property acquired by Henry Matsell in 1853 [3]. A post-1850 construction date also finds support from the circular saw marks on the floor framing, roof framing, and floor boards. The marks indicate a circular saw of about 5'

diameter, a tool unavailable until the 1850s. [4]. (However, inspection of the cottage could not rule out the possibility that those sawn elements could have replaced originals when the house was moved in the 1920s [5] [see Part I.B].) By 1860, the William Matsell family was recorded living at the cottage site [6], most likely in the Matsell Cottage [7]. Henry Matsell's grandchildren indicated that the cottage was at least fifty years old in 1914 [8], tending to confirm a construction date prior to 1865.

2. Architect: Not known--in all probability, an architect was not involved.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners:

Henry Matsell - (property owner - March 1853-65)  
Elizabeth W. Ferguson (Miller) - (1865-1905)  
Clarice Miller (Ferguson) - (1905-14)  
George and Cora B. Poshard - (1914-59)  
Arnold L. Poshard - (1959-80)  
Franklin D. Mecum (nephew of Arnold Poshard) - (1980 to April 14, 1992)  
Illinois Department of Transportation - (April 14, 1992-present)

4. Builders, Contractors, and Suppliers:

Possibly built by Henry C. Matsell as residence for his own family or for William Matsell (relationship unknown) (see also Part I.B - Historical Context).

5. Original Plans and Construction: No information has been found regarding original plans.

6. Alterations and Additions:

Terry Youngblood, a planning engineer with the Department of Transportation, reported in 1993 that some relatives felt that the cabin may have been reconstructed in the 1860s using logs and materials from a cabin at another site [9]. This is possible, as the floor framing, roof framing, and the floor boards are "radially sawn" using a very large (approximately 5' diameter) saw blade which technically was not available until the 1850s [10]. However, the logs themselves seem to be from an earlier period log cabin as the end joints on the logs do not fit exactly or were not cut carefully. This suggests that they may have been put back together in a different pattern and/or that the construction had been intended to be covered with clapboard siding [11]. The upper log at the stair opening also has a joist notch which would not have been needed if the stair opening (even smaller than presently existing) were there, and there does not appear to be any other filled in location for another stairs.

In 1925 or 1926 the cabin was moved approximately 43' southeasterly from the original site to its present location to avoid highway construction [12]. It is possible that the floor joists and flooring materials were replaced at that time.

The shed (half gabled) front porch appears to be a more recent addition as it was constructed with salvaged materials fastened with wire nails. There is also painted clapboard siding and two loft level windows still apparent in the front porch attic space and there is evidence of a step or sidewalk in front of the house bearing no relationship to the existing door onto the porch.

The kitchen wing or addition appears to have been part of the original cabin, which was originally covered with clapboard siding painted white. This siding is continuous over the joint between the log structure and the kitchen wing. In addition, the logs above the kitchen ceiling are not now covered with clapboards and there is no evidence of nail holes for either clapboards or furring strips. This indicates that this area was originally covered by a roof structure similar to the present roof above the kitchen.

It is also possible that this kitchen addition may have been rebuilt when the cabin was moved in the 1920s based on the fact that this shed (half gabled) addition is attached to the cabin with wire nails [13]. Although this room has no plumbing, it appears that a waste water drain to the ground outside was located along the east wall near the southeast corner. A 2" diameter hole exists through the wall near the floor and there are several towel rack devices attached to the east wall above this hole. It also appears that a cook stove (wood burning based on soot observations in the flue) was located along the south wall, east of the door to the main room where the flue could attach to the chimney. A small closet was constructed in the southwest corner, indicating that this same room may also have served as a bedroom. A toilet paper holder is mounted in the northeast corner on the north wall, indicating that this may have been the location of a chamber pot, as there is no other plumbing, and the apparent location for the outhouse was about 100' to the east [14].

Both the north and south additions have wood shingles (not shakes) similar in appearance, size, and condition to the main cabin roof, indicating that this work was done at the same time. These have then been covered with asphalt shingle roofing over asphalt felt paper on the north side of the ridge and heavy roll roofing over asphalt paper on the south side of the ridge.

The cabin appears to have been sided four times. The furring strips upon which the siding had been nailed were attached with cut nails. Empty nail holes were evident on the furring strips suggesting that at least one layer of siding had been removed prior to the existing siding. Attached to the furring strips was a layer of pine clapboarding plus two layers of asphalt sheet type siding [15].

The interior appeared in 1992 to have been redecorated several times [16] (See also Part II.C - Description of Interior).

A large cistern lined with stone existed within 10' of the northwest corner adjacent to the north shed building. Frank Mecum stated that he drained the cistern, demolished the concrete top and filled the cistern with gravel several years ago. A depression in the ground exists at the cistern location [17].

B. Historical Context:

John Drury, in his book Old Illinois Houses, stated that it is possible to find traces of pioneer southerners, here and there an old plantation-style house with white columns, gardens, wrought iron balconies, etc., but "rarely are found the rough-hewn logs and shakes that sheltered those who made the first clearings" [18]. John Crow built a log house in Carmi in the second decade of the nineteenth century which was covered with clapboards. This house served as a temporary courthouse and was later purchased and modified by General John M. Robinson, who was prominent in Illinois and U.S. politics, and still exists. The Robinson House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places [19].

The Matsell Cottage, on the other hand, more typically represents the less prominent and wealthy of the pioneers--those who cleared and worked the land. The earliest traceable date of settlement in White County is 1806, and by 1809 there were several families living in the county, with most families settling on or near the Wabash River or on the prairie areas [20]. White County experienced dramatic growth in 1833 when "poorer classes" of people, mostly from Tennessee, but also representing Virginia and Kentucky [21], moved into the area in order to obtain very inexpensive government land [22] or possibly to work with the new public works navigation projects on the Wabash and Little Wabash rivers. Log cabins were typically the settlers' first homes, often erected with the assistance of neighbors "house-raising" on one day and the owner then "chinking and dauh"ing on the next day [23].

The traditional Midland Log House was an adaptation from the Pennsylvania Germans by the Scotch-Irish and English pioneers into a one-room linear plan with external chimney [24]. "A principal problem of log wall houses is the difficulty of expanding them as additional space is required. Because the strength of the structure depends on the four corner joints, log houses are generally made up of room-sized squares or rectangular units called 'pens.' The simplest log houses have only a single unit, usually with a loft area above used for sleeping....Framed additions and porches were commonly added to log houses as local sawmills provided nearby sources of cut lumber. Similarly, many log houses were later covered with weatherboards, both to provide an additional seal and to make them appear more up-to-date. The tradition of building with horizontal log walls persisted in many areas long after cut timber was locally available. Usually a framework of roughly squared and notched logs was constructed to be originally covered with either shingles or weatherboard. These second-generation log houses can sometimes be distinguished from those originally built with exposed log walls by imprecise squaring of the logs, which resulted in relatively large, irregular gaps between timbers" [25].

The original Matsell Cottage is a very simple one and one-half story, single-pen with loft log structure which appears to have had a simple wood-frame kitchen wing. This cabin represents a very basic solution to the need for shelter for a young farm family in the late 1850s or early 1860s. Although the origins of the Matsell Cottage are not entirely clear, they apparently are connected with the namesake family that first occupied the property on which the log house is situated. Henry C. Matsell was born somewhere in New York State around 1797, probably married in the same state, and with his wife, Sarah, moved to Tennessee in the 1820s [26]. Henry, Sarah, and a daughter moved on to Illinois sometime before 1830 [27], perhaps joining an early wave of settlement of White county that extended from the first through fourth decades of the nineteenth century [28]. By 1850 the family, which included eleven unmarried children, was recorded as living in Grayville township, northeast of Carmi township in the northeast corner of White County [29].

In 1853 Henry Matsell purchased 40 acres of property in Carmi township, including the area eventually occupied by the Matsell Cottage, from the federal government [30].

He and his family apparently then moved to Carmi township and most likely erected the cottage [31]. By 1860, however, the Matsell's and six of their children were living in a two-story frame house on a larger property they had acquired to the north of the original 40-acre tract [32]. At that time the Matsell Cottage was occupied--but not owned--by the William H. Matsell family of six [33]. William's relationship to Henry is unknown, but by judging by age, he could have been the latter's son or nephew.

In 1865, Henry sold his original 40 acres, including the cottage site, to Elizabeth W. Ferguson for \$275.00. By 1870, Elizabeth had married a Moses J. Miller and was occupying the site along with her husband and three children. Thirty-five years later, one of the children, Clarice Miller Ferguson,

acquired the property. A legal challenge to her ownership, however, produced a 1914 auction in which George and Cora B. Poshard successfully bid \$700.00 for the improved acreage [34].

In 1922, the State of Illinois purchased 2.75 acres of the Poshard property, including the site of the Matsell Cottage, for \$532.50 [35], for construction of Illinois Route 1. In connection with that project, the cottage was moved in 1925 or 1926, 43' southeasterly from its original location [36]. Cora Poshard lived in the moved cottage until her death in 1959, and her son, Arnold L. Poshard, occupied it until he died in the 1980s. His nephew, Franklin D. Mecum, then acquired the property [37], and in 1992 sold a parcel that included the Matsell Cottage to the State of Illinois to permit widening of Route 1 [38].

## PART II ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

#### 1. Architectural Character:

One and one-half story, side-gable, single-pen, log house. In March of 1992, no logs were visible from the exterior as the cabin had been re-sided with two layers of asphalt siding over wood siding [39]. It appears that the original cabin was sided with lap siding which was painted. The painted siding is still apparent above the ceiling of the front porch addition and is also continuous over the joint between the log portion and kitchen addition. This south wall also has two small upper windows just below the original roof eave to provide light to the second floor. The logs above the ceiling of the kitchen addition are not sided nor well chinked and do not appear to have ever been sided (nails or nail holes are not apparent), indicating that the north side of the cabin had a frame room attached from the beginning. The general character of the building was that of a modified "salt box"--tall front wall with long sloping roof to the rear over the kitchen area. (See photographic documentation HABS No. IL 1184-1 through IL 1184-12 and floor plan sketches, text pages thirteen and fourteen.)

#### 2. Condition of Fabric:

The condition of the primary fabric (logs and framing) is generally good and not deteriorated as there have been no serious leaks. There is some evidence of water penetration on the walls around the chimney.

The exterior covering is not now in good condition, especially now that some has been removed as part of the several investigations. The clapboard siding is in very poor condition. The exterior door has been broken as a result of vandalism or break-ins. The windows are unpainted and badly weathered, however the glass is intact.

The interior finishes are generally in very poor condition, again partly because of these investigations. The kitchen flooring is weak and damaged in several areas.

B. Description of Exterior:1. Overall Dimensions:

18'-6" x 40'-0" overall includes: 18'-6" square one and one-half story, single-pen log cabin center section, 12'-0" x 18'-0" one-story, wood-frame north kitchen addition, and 10'-0" x 18'-0" one-story wood-frame south porch addition.

2. Foundations:

Sandstone piers are located at the four log cabin corners. Two sandstone piers are located on each end of the beams. A combination concrete and sandstone pier exists at the center of the 12" square sawn oak center beams where they overlap [40].

3. Walls:

The logs which form the cabin are hewn oak approximately 6" thick in width at the lower level and 4" thick at the upper loft level. The tops and bottoms of the logs were left in the round, many with bark still attached. Chinking was a soft grayish brown mortar with varying sized pieces of wood wedged in. Some areas had been modified or repaired with hard white mortar. The wooden pieces between the logs appeared to be both split and reciprocally sawn [41].

4. Structural System, Framing:

The approximately 18'-6" long logs are 6" wide and 9-10" high at the lower level. The logs are only 4" wide at the upper loft level. These logs are stacked with interlocking square notched ends at corners. The bottom edge logs rest on sandstone piers at the corners only.

The first floor framing consists of 2" x 8" circular sawn oak joists at 24" on center spanning in the north-south direction. These joists appear to be notched on the edge beam logs and span the entire width of cabin. Additional support for these joists is provided by two 1" square sawn oak beams located at approximately mid span. These beams are supported by stone (and concrete) piers and are independent of the edge wall logs and are not true "summer beams" [42].

The second floor joists are circular sawn (large saw - approximately 5' diameter) full 2" x 7-1/2" oak at 24" to 25" on center also spanning in the north-south direction the full 17'-6" span. The second floor slopes down generally to the east. These joists are exposed and painted.

The main second floor roof rafters are full 2" x 4" at 24" on center butting together at the ridge. The ceiling joists serve as collar beams and are also 2" x 4" at 24" on center. Additional 1" x 4" collar beams exist near the ridge at every fourth rafter.

The kitchen floor joists are full 2" wide and 6" deep at approximately 24" on center spanning the full north-south direction. The south ends of these joists bear on a 2" x 4" ledger strip nailed to the bottom log of the main log cabin.

The kitchen ceiling joists are full 2" wide and 5-1/2" to 6" deep oak at approximately 24" on center spanning the full north-south direction. The south ends bear on ledger (difference between 6" and 4" thick logs). The kitchen roof rafters are full 2" x 4" oak at 24" on center. The ceiling joists appear to be radially sawn.

5. Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads:

The front porch addition does not appear to be original and is of miscellaneous framing lumber similar in size and spacing to the kitchen framing. The front and rear stoops are of concrete and not original.

6. Chimneys:

An approximately 16" square brick chimney exists on the north wall of the log cabin section beginning approximately 52" above the first floor (supported on wood buttress type framing) and extending through the upper level and roof. This chimney is covered with painted hard plaster. Stove pipe openings exist on the first floor, one to the main room and one to the kitchen. There is no stove pipe opening at the second floor. The chimney extends approximately 6' to 7' through the roof (height approximately equal to ridge). The top of chimney is double corbeled, and the exterior of the chimney is plastered with cement.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and Doors:

The 30" x 80-3/4" two panel wood door from the yard to the east side of the front porch is not original.

At the south entry door from the front porch to the main cabin front room, the door frame (29-1/4" x 6'-2-3/4") is attached with square nails and appears to be original with more recently applied trim and stops. The 1-3/8" entry door with top glass and two bottom panels does not appear to be original.

At the north door from the main cabin room to the kitchen, the frame (29-1/2" x 6'-7") also is attached with square nails and appears to be original. The 1-1/4" thick four panel double morticed and tenoned door may also be original due to its unusual size and configuration, however the hinges have been modified.

At the north door from the kitchen addition to the exterior, the frame (30-1/2" x 6'-1-1/2") may be original to this addition, however, the door has been modified to fit the available opening and does not appear to be original.

The door panel from the main cabin room to the stairs is made up of 1" x 3" tongue and groove wood boards fastened with nails to top and bottom 1" x 4" wood rails.



b. Windows and Shutters:

Main Room - The only windows are two four-over-four double hung (22-3/4" x 62-1/2") located in the east wall (south wall prior to the 1920s move). These windows are attached with wire nails indicating they may be replacement windows [43].

Second Floor Loft - The upper floor east window (26-1/2" x 46") is six-over-six light double hung sash attached with cut nails [44]. The sill to this window is 47-1/2" above the floor and the top of the window is flush with the ceiling. The two front (south) window casings no longer contain windows and are covered over with horizontal 1" x 4" boards at the west window and a hinged wood panel at the east window. Both frames and sills are still exposed in the porch attic space.

Kitchen Addition - One six-over-six double hung window (26-1/2" x 44-1/2") centered at the west wall and one similar six-over-six double hung (27-1/2" x 44-3/4") centered on the east wall.

Entry Porch - A horizontal band of 30" (approximate width) windows from another building have been installed on the south and west sides, and two 32" square decorative windows from another building flank each side of the porch entry door on the east side.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, Covering:

Main Gable: The approximately twelve-over-twelve sloped roof is covered with asphalt roll roofing and asphalt felt paper on the south, and asphalt shingles with asphalt felt paper on the north. These roof coverings are installed over wood shingles (not "shakes") on rough 1" x 4" nailers on 2" x 4" rafters. Some nailers appear to have been replaced also. (This type of shingles appears consistent over the entire building, suggesting this was all done at the same time, possibly in the 1920s when the building was moved.)

South Shed Roof Over Entry Porch: The approximately six-over-twelve sloped roof slopes down to the south with asphalt roll roofing and asphalt felt paper over wood shingles and miscellaneous 1" x 4" nailers (some tongue and groove) at 8" on center. The lap siding inside the space attic is painted indicating that this porch was not part of the original. (See II.A.1 for additional narrative regarding this issue.)

North Room Shed Roof: The approximately five-over-twelve sloped lean-to roof system appears very similar to the main center section roof. The roof covering is asphalt shingles and asphalt felt paper over wood shingles and 1" x 4" to 1" x 8" nailers. From the inside of the attic area, it appears as if the roof has leaked and been repaired several times. The back side of the logs in the attic space is exposed and unpainted, and poorly chinked.

b. Cornice, Eaves:

The eaves have plain 1" x 6" wood rake and fascia boards (approximately 8" overhang) without detail. The eave at the kitchen addition is exposed cut rafters, however, nail holes and other evidence indicates that a wood trim and gutter/downspout to the cistern were installed at the face end of the rafters.

c. Dormers, Cupolas, Towers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

a. First Floor Description:

Main Small Room: Approximately 17'-6" square (interior dimensions) with the main door to the entry porch area centered on south wall and the door to the kitchen area centered on north wall. The short stairsteps to second floor are along the north wall going up to the northwest corner (beginning at the kitchen door). These stairs have been enclosed with a thin stud wall and solid 1" thick wood boards with a 1" thick door at the bottom. Two four-over-four double hung windows are located on the east wall.

Front Porch: 9'-9" (north-south) x 18'-0-3/4" (east-west) with a 6'-6" ceiling has continuous windows on two sides and two windows and center two panel entry door on the east side. The north wall (face of logs) is covered with 1/2" thick painted clapboard siding (4-1/2 to 4-3/4" exposure). The other three sides of the porch room are unfinished (exposed painted wood).

Kitchen: The north backroom kitchen is 11'-8" (north-south) x 18'-1-1/2" (east-west) and has a 7'-2" (varies) ceiling. A 3'-9-1/2" x 6'-1" closet exists in the southwest corner with 2'-0" x 6'-0" high door. A six-over-six double hung window is located centered on the east and west walls.

b. Second Floor Description:

Approximately 17'-6" square with irregular east and west end gable end walls (logs up to 46" with flat stud framing and lap siding up to roof). The north and south side walls are logs up 46" to 48" where rafters bear. The ceiling from these north and south walls slopes up to the flat center section, the height of which varies (7'-7" to 7'-10"). A single six-over-six double hung window is located on the east wall and two small square window openings (now covered over) still exist down low near the floor on the south wall.

2. Stairways:

The stair enclosure is 6'-2" long by 2'-10-1/2" wide and contains eleven approximately 8" treads which overlap each other approximately 4". The riser heights vary from 7" to 8". The first riser is missing, appearing to have been revised when the stairs were enclosed and the stair door panel installed. The stairway appears to have been enlarged by cutting into the

second of the floor joists at a later time. During our April 28, 1993, investigation, a delivery label was found behind the wall paper at the inside of the stairwell indicating that merchandise was shipped to Arnold Poshard at this rural address (Route 4, Box 104?, Carmi, Illinois) from the Chicago Mail Order Company, 511 South Paulina St., Chicago, Illinois. Because of the apparent age of the paper and the type face style used on the printing, this stairwell modification or decoration appears to have been done in the 1920s or earlier.

3. Flooring:

First Floor Main Room: 5" circular sawn tongue and groove wood hoards, running east-west, are attached with a single square nail at each joist at 24" on center. This flooring appears to be original.

Entry Porch Floor: 7" x 3/4" shiplapped wood, running north-south. Face wire nailed.

North Kitchen Room: Tongue and groove wood, varies from 1" x 4" to 1" x 6", running east-west.

Upper Level: 1" x 5" tongue and groove wood similar to the first floor, running east-west.

4. Wall and Ceiling Finishes:

The lower floor main room walls had been covered with wood paneling under which are two layers of wall paper attached with wire roofing nails. The wall paper covers numerous coats of whitewash over the logs [45]. The ceiling joists and exposed underside of wood flooring have been painted.

The upper cabin room walls were covered with wallpaper over logs for the first 46" above floor. Sloped ceiling is wallpaper over full 1" x 11" painted (white) planks nailed to bottom of rafters which are lapped like siding. The original wall and ceiling finishes appear to be whitewash/paint on the exposed logs, on the inside face of the lapsiding at the end walls, and the 1" boards at the ceiling.

The kitchen addition walls are 3/8" x 4" painted beaded board tongue and groove wood strips attached with wire nails and are covered with at least one layer of wall paper which includes a 2" decorative hand at the cornice. The ceiling is painted beaded board (7/16" x 3-1/4").

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and Doors: See II.B.7.a

b. Windows: See II.B.7.b

6. Decorative Features and Trim:

None, except basic trim around doors, windows, and wallpaper.

7. Hardware:

Hardware is minimal and none appears to be original or dating back to the mid 19th Century.

8. Mechanical Equipment:

a. Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation:

Heating of the main room appears to have been from a wood stove (see Part II.B.6 - Chimneys). An 8" diameter hole is apparent in the ceiling (second floor) near the west side (opposite the heating stove area) which would have allowed heat to rise up into the upper floor area.

The cook stove probably heated the kitchen area.

The front porch does not appear to have been heated.

Ventilation was achieved by opening doors or the double hung windows. There was no air conditioning.

No evidence of a fireplace or hearth was found during the Phillippe investigation and it appears that this structure was probably always heated by a stove.

b. Lighting:

Two electrical wall outlets are located below the two east windows in the main room. There are no ceiling electrical boxes in the main room, therefore floor or table lamps may have been used to supplement the two windows. (A small electrical panel was located in the northeast corner of the entry porch.)

Some wiring and junction boxes exist above the front porch ceiling indicating there may have been outlets at the second floor, however, actual boxes or outlets are not evident within the room.

Locations for two 48" high wall outlets and a central ceiling light are apparent in the kitchen.

c. Plumbing:

None, except a possible gray water drain line from the kitchen sink area to the exterior.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and Orientation:

The cottage and the one-story out building, approximately 10' to the northeast, is presently situated parallel to and about 60' to the southeast of Illinois Route 1. The south entry porch faces to what years ago was the east-west main road. A sketch map provided by the Illinois

Department of Transportation (IDOT), indicates that the cottage, prior to the 1925-26 move to the present location, was located approximately on the center line of Illinois Route 1, and closer to the railroad tracks, just 100' or so further to the northwest. (Although this railroad construction was started in 1857, it was not completed until after 1867, thus it probably had little or no influence on the original location of the cottage [46].) The original orientation of the main axis of the cottage was east-west rather than the present north-south.

Based on the early maps of the roads, the railroad, and the outbuildings and cistern, the original (pre-1920s) orientation of the front door was probably to the northwest rather than to the southwest. The living room windows would have then faced southwest rather than northeast to the privy and the other out buildings. In addition, the cistern would have been closer to the kitchen, which would have been a functional arrangement.

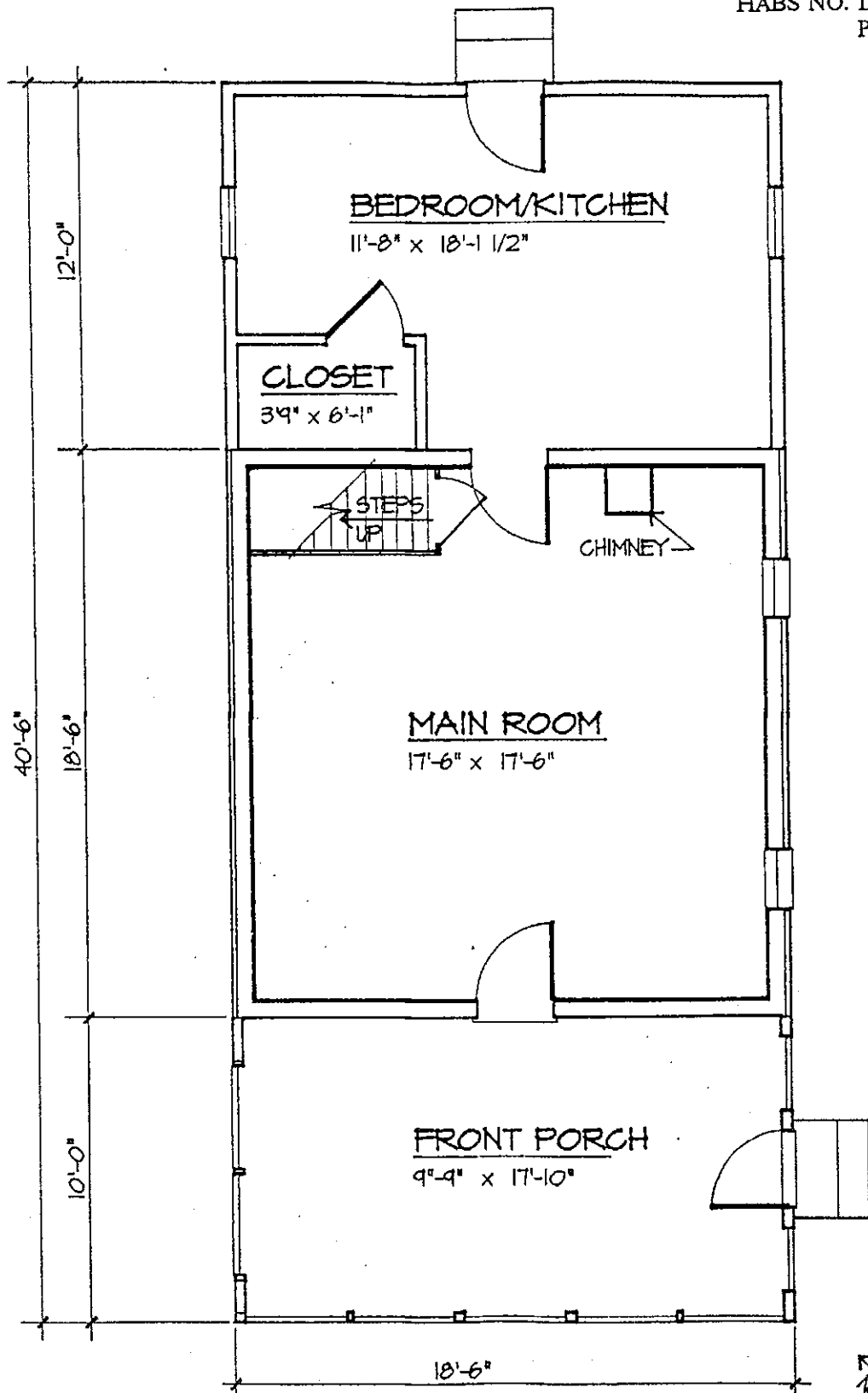
2. Historic Landscape Design:

No information is available, although vegetable gardens and fruit trees planted by the settlers were typical.

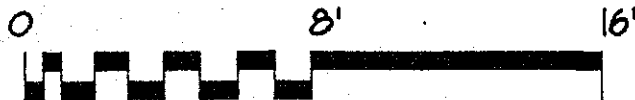
3. Outbuildings:

Only one two compartment (17'-9" x 12'-11" x 10'-0") clapboard sided outbuilding remains. Both access doors to this structure face the kitchen. According to Frank Mecum, the outhouse was approximately 100' to the east [47].

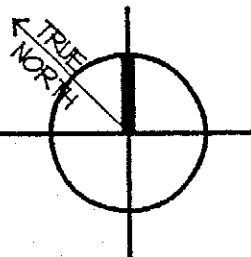
The same sketch map referenced above indicates other removed outbuildings to the northeast of the original cottage location, including a privy and a chicken shed.

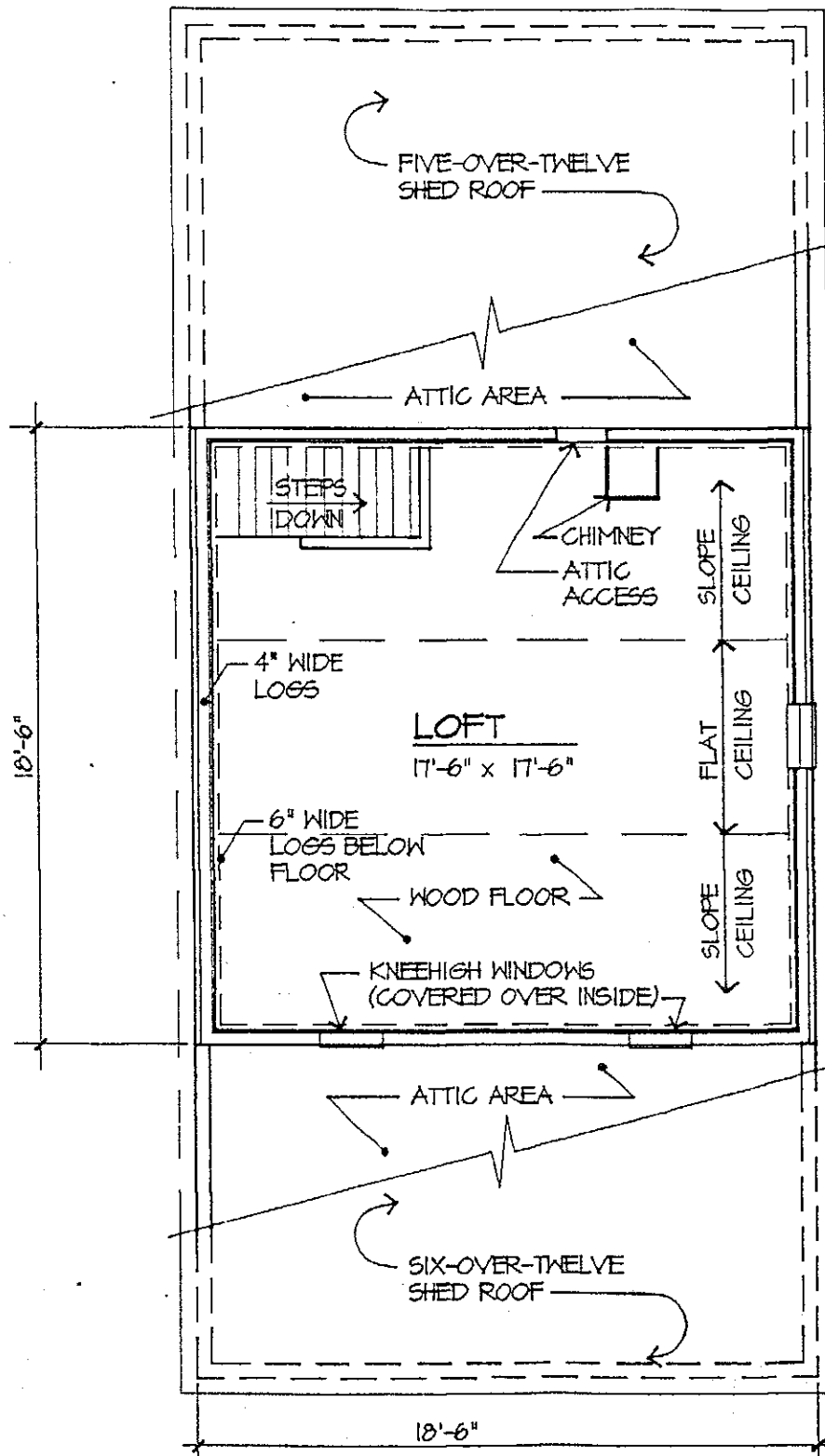


# 1ST FLOOR PLAN



SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



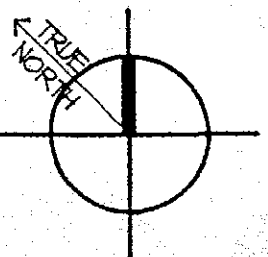


## 2ND FLOOR PLAN



SCALE: 3/16\" = 1'-0"

19816MATMAT-A2



PART III. ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Virginia & Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 84.
- <sup>2</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup>United States Government Land Office Survey, Survey Plat, 1851, Illinois State Archives, Springfield, Illinois.
- <sup>4</sup>John O. Curtis, "Circular Saws and the History of Technology," Association of Preservation Technology (APT) Bulletin 7:3 (1975): 163.
- <sup>5</sup>Terry Youngblood, planning engineer, Illinois Department of Transportation, interview by author Robert Swenson, 3 May 1993.
- <sup>6</sup>Department of Interior, U.S. Census Office, United States Manuscript Census of Population ([Washington, D.C.] 1860).
- <sup>7</sup>Joseph Phillippe, "Resource Investigation Program Report for IDOT, Job No. P980-002-86," University of Illinois (11 June 1992) Illinois Department of Transportation, Springfield, Illinois.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., 4.
- <sup>9</sup>Youngblood, interview.
- <sup>10</sup>Curtis, 163.
- <sup>11</sup>McAlester, 84.
- <sup>12</sup>Phillippe, 3.
- <sup>13</sup>Ibid., 5.
- <sup>14</sup>Frank Mecum, interview by Robert Swenson, 28 April 1993, written notes; conducted at Matsell Cottage near Brownsville, Illinois.
- <sup>15</sup>Phillippe, 5.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid., 5.
- <sup>17</sup>Mecum, interview.
- <sup>18</sup>John Drury, Old Illinois Houses (Chicago: Chicago Daily News, 1941; rep., Springfield, Illinois: Illinois State Historical Society, 1948; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 1.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., 24; National Register of Historic Places file, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Springfield, Illinois.



<sup>20</sup>History of White County, Illinois (Chicago: InterState Publishing Company, 1883), 221.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 240.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 227.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 240.

<sup>24</sup>McAlester, 82.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 84.

<sup>26</sup>Phillippe, 2; Department of the Interior, U.S. Census Office, United States Manuscript Census of Population ([Washington, D.C.] 1950).

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>History of White County, 221, 536.

<sup>29</sup>Census Office, 1850.

<sup>30</sup>Phillippe, 1.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>32</sup>Census Office, 1860.

<sup>33</sup>Phillippe, 1.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>38</sup>Youngblood, interview.

<sup>39</sup>Phillippe, 4.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., Figure 18.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., Figure 18.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>46</sup>History of White County, 221.

<sup>47</sup>Mecum, interview.

#### PART IV. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

##### A. Original Architectural Drawings:

None available.

##### B. Early Views:

None available.

##### C. Interviews:

Mecum, Frank, last private owner and nephew of Arnold Poshard. Interview by Robert Swenson. Matsell Cottage site, Brownsville, Illinois. 28 April 1992.

Youngblood, Terry, IDOT engineer. Interview by Robert Swenson, written notes. Matsell Cottage site, Brownsville, Illinois. 3 May 1993.

##### D. Bibliography:

###### 1. Primary and Unpublished Sources:

Phillippe, Joseph. Resource Investigation Program Report for IDOT, Job No. P980-002-86. Urbana: University of Illinois. 11 June 1992.

Hart, David McLarin, Report: X-Ray Inspection & Analysis - Lincoln Home, Subcontractor to Ferry & Henderson Architects (Robert Swenson, Project Architect), Springfield, IL, April 1980.

###### 2. Secondary and Published Sources:

Curtis, John O. "Circular Saws and the History of Technology." Association for Preservation Technology (APT) Bulletin 7:3 (1975): 163.

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Howard, Hugh. How Old Is This House. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1989.

Madden, Betty L. Arts, Crafts, and Architecture in Early Illinois. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1975.

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Drury, John. Old Illinois Houses. Chicago: Chicago Daily News, 1941; repr. Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Society, 1948; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.

PART V. PROJECT INFORMATION

A highway modernization program for the 9.26 miles of Illinois Route 1 between Norris City and Carmi, Illinois has been in the planning stage since 1987 and the project was cleared for construction in 1988. Mr. Randy Dickerson, a concerned citizen, made IDOT staff aware that an important early log cabin was in danger of being destroyed by the planned road construction. On March 18, 1992, Terry Youngblood (IDOT District 7), Franklin D. Mecum (property owner at that time), and Joseph Phillippe (Resource Investigation Program) visited the site. Upon inspection of the interior of the structure it was found to be a one and one-half story, side-gable, single-pen, log house as reported by Mr. Dickerson. A letter report documenting the results of this initial assessment was submitted April 20, 1992. On June 11, 1992, Jerry Jacobson (IDOT) requested that the RIP conduct more preliminary field investigation, documentary search, and oral history research. This additional research was conducted by Joseph Phillippe in an attempt to date the log house and provide data for the evaluation of the significance of the structure. This report was the primary source of information for this current HABS effort.

Robert Swenson, Architect, Walton and Associates Architects, P.C., under contract for the Illinois Department of Transportation, conducted investigations at the site on April 28, 1993, and on May 3, 1993.

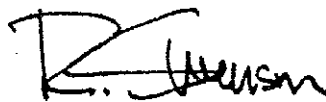
Ed Russo, Curator of the Sangamon Valley Collection, Lincoln Library, Springfield, Illinois, assisted Mr. Swenson by providing historic research information and editorial reviews of several draft documents.

Photography was provided by Roger McCredie, IDOT, Springfield, Illinois.

Jerry Jacobson, Historic Resources Coordinator, Illinois Department of Transportation, Springfield, Illinois, provided editorial and content review of various draft documents. In August, 1993, as a result of a National Park Service review, Mr. Jacobson also provided major text revisions for the "Statement of Significance," "Dates of Erection," and "Historical Context."

This HABS recordation was completed as a result of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Federal Highway Administration and the Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer, concurred by the Illinois Department of Transportation, and accepted by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

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